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-- Description of the Preferred Embodiment: --.

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1-6 and enter the following new claims.

A1 -- 7. A crimping unit for automatically crimping ribbons of flexible flat cable, the unit comprising:

a guide surface having a guide surface plane for guiding a ribbon of flat cable;

a plurality of crimping stations arranged vertically offset from said guide surface plane for crimping a connector onto an end of a branch of the ribbon; and

a plurality of tilting ramps each having a first end and a second end, and each being mounted to be tiltable towards said guide surface whereby said first end is brought into said guide surface plane and whereby said second end is even with a respective said crimping station, and wherein, when a respective said ramp is tilted toward said guide surface on command, a predetermined branch of the ribbon follows the ramp and travels to a respective said crimping stations and receives a connector.

8. The crimping unit according to claim 7, wherein each said ramp is associated with a given said crimping station for guiding a

branch of the ribbon of flat cable to said crimping station for crimping.

9. The crimping unit according to claim 7, wherein said guide surface <sup>15</sup> drives the ribbon in two opposite directions of travel.

A1 10. The crimping unit according to claim 7, which comprises a plurality of rollers having two directions of rotation, wherein the ribbon of flat cable is driven along said guide surface by said rollers.

11. The crimping unit according to claim 10, wherein said rollers driving the ribbon are vertically retractable for preventing damage to the connectors crimped onto the ribbon.

12. A crimping process for crimping connectors onto branches of ribbons of flexible flat cable, which comprises:

providing a crimping unit according to claim 7;

driving a ribbon of flat cable along a guide surface of the crimping unit;

issuing a command for tilting at least one tilting ramp for guiding at least one branch of the ribbon along the tilted ramp to a corresponding crimping station; and

crimping a connector onto the branch in the crimping station.